



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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Pope Francis

March 14th, 2013

Dear brothers and sisters!

Peace and all good to each of you!

In the name of the CIOFS Presidency, during this hour of grace with the election of Pope Francis, I feel the pressing need to share with you a few thoughts and feelings. How great is our emotion! How well God takes care of his Church, filling her with abundant graces and blessings! Praise be the name of the Lord!

God always surprises us in his way of bringing, with sweetness, His Church into the authentic furrow of his Love.

“Brothers and sisters, good evening!”: these would be the first words of the Pope: **Fraternity**, the reality of recognizing ourselves equally as brothers and sisters!

The pectoral cross of iron: sign of **simplicity** and of **poverty**.

Gratitude, love and thanksgiving for the one who preceded him, the beloved Benedict XVI: Eucharistic attitude and fraternal.

Pope Francis refers to himself always and only as bishop and, in particular, as Bishop of the Church of Rome which presides over all the churches in charity: sign of authentic collegiality, in his role as presider of the sister Churches in charity.

The Pope exhorted reciprocal prayer: one for the other.

Before giving his blessing, the Pope asked a favor: the prayer of the brothers and sisters to implore God's blessing on him. He called this prayer, specifically, “the prayer of the People”: sign of a profound **sharing** and affirmation of the true nature of the Church as **total Church** (the People of God above all else: unity ahead of distinction) and **Church of communion** (reciprocal prayer and service, one for the other).

We all felt a great emotion when the Pope bowed to receive the blessing of God invoked through the intercession of all his brothers and sisters: concrete sign of **humility**, of **simplicity** and of the recognition of our equal dignity, human and Christian.

The blessing to all his brothers and sisters, *urbi et orbi*, **only after** having received the blessing of God, from his brothers and sisters.

The name **Francis** recognizes the Lord's call to *repair the house*, through the charism of Francis and his spirituality, in full conformity to Christ.

This Jesuit Pope has given us the most concrete signs of an authentic Franciscan!

And today, in his first homily, he has left us with three “mandates”: **walk, build, confess**.

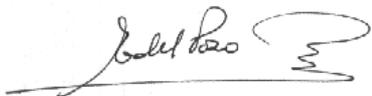
Confess Christ crucified! As Secular Franciscans, do we remember, each of us, article 10 of our General Constitutions? We invite you to read it with great attention!!!

His name and this beginning of his pontificate are like the sign and the program for a vigorous revival of a Church, evangelical and apostolic, which gives preference to the poor and to the brothers and sisters, a Church rooted in her Lord Jesus, *sine glossa*, as was thought and seen by Francis.

All of us, professed Secular Franciscans, have a still larger duty to perform, that of supporting him with all our strenghts, through prayer, witness and action.

May the infinitely Good God fill Pope Francis with blessings and with his grace!

In the name of the CIOFS Presidency,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Encarnación del Pozo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Encarnación del Pozo, OFS
Minister General